

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

SAM-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20

COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /210 W

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O R 200510Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7768

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON UNN

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

USLO PEKING

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USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

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CDR USSAG NKP

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CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

USDAO SAIGON
COMUSMACTHAI
DODSPECREP BANKGOK
DODSPECREP NKP
354 TFW KORAT
CHSPECACTS BANGKOK
CDR JCRC NKP
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
56 SOW NKP
388 TFW KORAT

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1342

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW,
388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW FOR DO/DI; MACTHAI FOR J-2
AND PAO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA
SUBJECT: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - FEBRUARY 19

REF: STATE 030795 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON THE EVE OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SIGNING OF THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT (FEBRUARY 21),
THE TWO LAO SIDES APPEAR TO BE ON THE VERGE OF NAMING
A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE LAO KING HAS EXPRESSED
HIS WILLINGNESS TO INVEST THE NEW GOVERNMENT WITHOUT
SEEKING APPROVAL OF LAO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THEREBY
ELIMINATING LAST APPARENT OBSTACLE TO FORMATION OF NEW
PGNU. ON MILITARY SIDE, SITUATION REMAINED RELATIVELY
QUIET THROUGHOUT KINGDOM. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE
TAPERED OFF, ALTHOUGH STUDENTS REMAIN RESTIVE IN VIENTIANE
AND LUANG PRABANG. ECONOMIC SITUATION HAS BEEN STABLE,
DESPITE A RUN ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE, WHICH MAY BE TIED
TO NERVOUSNESS OVER IMPENDING FORMATION OF PGNU.
END SUMMARY

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IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE REQUEST (REFTEL), LAO WEEKLY SITREP
WILL HENCEFORTH BE FORWARDED TO ADDRESSEES BY COB EACH
TUESDAY.

I. IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

1. JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION DEVELOPMENTS

AT THIRTEENTH JCCIA PLENARY SESSION FEBRUARY 14, RLG AND LPF DELEGATIONS TOOK IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD RE-ACTIVATION OF ICC/LAOS. IT WAS DECIDED TO PREPARE AGREED TRANSLATION INTO FRENCH AND ENGLISH OF BOTH VIENTIANE AGREEMENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOL FOR PRESENTATION TO THE ICC. AT A MEETING OF DELEGATION CHIEFS FEBRUARY 19, THE LPF TABLED A DRAFT LETTER CALLING FOR REACTIVATION OF ICC AND REPORTEDLY SPELLING OUT SOME OF THE ICC TASKS. RLG IS STUDYING THIS DRAFT AND IT IS TO BE DISCUSSED BY THE TWO SIDES FEBRUARY 20.

ACCORDING TO RLG SPOKESMAN, IN VIEW OF IMMINENT FORMATION OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU) AND JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC), THE TWO DELEGATIONS DISCUSSED RENOVATION OF LIVING QUARTERS TO BE USED BY LPF MEMBERS OF NEW PGNU AND JNPC, AS WELL AS LOCATIONS RLG PROPOSED FOR ITS COMPONENT TO THE PROTECTIVE MILITARY FORCES (PMFS) IN VIENTIANE.

2. RLG ACTIVITIES

AS NOTED IN OTHER REPORTING (NOTAL), CONSERVATIVE FORCES IN LAO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY INSISTING THAT CONSTITUTION BE RESPECTED AND POLITICAL PARTIES CONSULTED IN FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. LPF, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO SUCH AN IDEA AND SOUVANNA HAS BEEN PLANNING TO REPEAT 1962 SCENARIO, OR FINESSE ISSUE BY NAMING ONE INCUMBENT DEPUTY FROM EACH PROVINCE TO THE JNPC TO BE FORMED CONCURRENTLY WITH PGNU. HOWEVER, ON FEBRUARY 18, SOUVANNA INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE KING TOLD HIM FEBRUARY 17 THAT HE IS WILLING TO INVEST PGNU EVEN IF NO LEGISLATIVE ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN. KING ALSO TOLD SOUVANNA THAT HE IS WILLING TO DISSOLVE

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PENDING NEW ELECTION. SOUVANNA WAS VERY PLEASED AT THIS DEVELOPMENT, BECAUSE LAST IMPEDIMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF PGNU HAS THUS DISAPPEARED. HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM LPF "PLENIPOTENTIARY" PHOUN SIPRASEUTH FEBRUARY 19 OF THE KING'S DECISION. ALSO, ON FEBRUARY 19, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MET TO DISCUSS GOVERNMENT CABINET SLATE FOR NEW PGNU, AS WELL AS TO CONSIDER NAMES OF RLG REPS ON JNPC. (COMMENT: WHILE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT GOVERNMENT CAN BE FORMED THIS WEEK, IT MAY BE AT LEAST NAMED BY SOUVANNA'S FEBRUARY 21 DEADLINE.)

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MET FEBRUARY 15 AND 19 TO DISCUSS THE DEPUTIES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF THE PGNU. AT THE FEBRUARY 19 MEETING, THE ASSEMBLY DECIDED TO SET ASIDE ITS DESIRE FOR

AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION AND REFUSED TO NOMINATE THIRTY OF ITS MEMBERS AS CANDIDATES FOR THE JNPC AS REQUESTED BY SOUVANNA. THE COMMITTEE SAID THAT THE RLG SHOULD MAKE

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PACE OF WORK ON LPF FACILITIES LOCATED ON MAIN COMMERCIAL STREET OF VIENTIANE (SAMSENTHAI) ACCELERATED PERCEPTIBLY DURING WEEK, AS PAINTERS, CARPENTERS, AND WORKERS RENOVATED THREE FORMER MINISTRY OF JUSTICE BUILDINGS FOR IMMINENT OCCUPANCY BY LPF.

ON FEBRUARY 12, FOUR LPF REPRESENTATIVES WERE ESCORTED BY MR-V DEPUTY COMMANDER THROUGHOUT CAMP CHINAIMO. PURPOSE OF EXERCISE WAS TO SHOW THEM THAT CAMP CHINAIMO WAS NOT AN ARMED CAMP, BUT A MILITARY REGION HEADQUARTERS AND SITE OF SEVERAL MILITARY SCHOOLS.

RADIO PATHET LAO, FEBRUARY 16, WELCOMED THE ARRIVAL FEBRUARY 9 OF A HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY DELEGATION LED BY JANOS BORBANDI, A MEMBER OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE. IN ADDITION, MR. WERNER BLATTER, THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REP IN VIENTIANE, VISITED THE LPF ZONE LAST WEEK AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND HIS WIFE DEPARTED VIENTIANE FEBRUARY 19 ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SAM NEUA.

II. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

DURING REPORTING PERIOD, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT LAOS TAPERED OFF, ALTHOUGH STUDENTS REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

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RESTIVE. DEMONSTRATIONS IN KHAMMOUANE ENDED FEBRUARY 15 AND CLASSES RECOMMENCED THE 18TH AFTER THE PROVINCE CHIEF PLEDGED TO PURGE HIS ADMINISTRATION OF CORRUPT ELEMENTS. DEMONSTRATIONS IN BAN HOUOI SAI TERMINATED FEBRUARY 13.

STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY IN LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE, WHERE TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN NO DEMONSTRATIONS, APPEAR RESTIVE. THERE IS NOW LESS OF A POSSIBILITY OF A DEMONSTRATION IN VIENTIANE ON THE 21ST, THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE VIENTIANE ACCORDS, AND IN LUANG PRABANG AFTER THE 21ST (SINCE THE STUDENT FEDERATION ON 18 FEBRUARY DECIDED TO RESPECT THE PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST THAT NO DEMONSTRATIONS BE HELD IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG). HOWEVER, CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE TO EXIST.

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 15, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LAO FEDERATION OF STUDENTS, KHAMSAY SOURINTHONE, ISSUED A STRONGLY-WORDED DECLARATION WHICH TOOK A DECIDEDLY MORE STRIDENT ATTITUDE THAN THE FEDERATION HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY. INSTEAD OF GENERAL ATTACKS ON CORRUPTION, HIGH PRICES, ETC., KHAMSAY DIRECTED HIS CRITICISM AT POLITICAL TARGETS, IN PARTICULAR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE ACCUSED THE DEPUTIES OF BEING INCREASINGLY DISCREDITED IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE BECAUSE (A) THEIR ELECTION HAD BEEN RIGGED, (B) CERTAIN OF THEM HAVE BEEN BOUGHT OFF BY FORCES OPPOSED TO PEACE, AND (C) OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY, THEY ARE CONSORTING WITH DISHONEST BUSINESSMEN TO ENRICH THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE DECLARATION EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN THE PGNU AND JNPC AND CALLED FOR RAPID FORMATION OF THOSE TWO BODIES. STUDENT IRE MAY HAVE HELPED REDUCE ASSEMBLY OPPOSITION TO SOUVANNA'S PLANS TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT BY DIRECT INVESTITURE BY KING.

III. MILITARY SITUATION

DURING TEN DAY PERIOD, ONLY MILITARY INCIDENT IN THE KINGDOM WAS A MINOR ATTACK BY FIRE FEBRUARY 14 TWENTY-FIVE KMS NORTHWEST OF LONG TIENG. NO CASUALTIES REPORTED. SUBSEQUENTLY, 3 MINOR INCIDENTS OCCURRED FEBRUARY 16 IN AREA 5-15 KMS SOUTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE IN MR-IV. ALL THREE INCIDENTS WERE ENEMY-INITIATED
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GROUND ATTACKS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE AGAINST FRIENDLY POSITIONS. THREE RLGAF SOLDIERS WERE WIA. ENEMY CASUALTIES ARE UNKNOWN.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

USAID COST-OV-LIVING INDEX REMAINED STABLE LAST WEEK, AS DID PRICES OF RICE AND MEAT. FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEMAND FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 15 SUBSTANTIALLY EXCEEDED DEMAND OF PRECEDING WEEKS, PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF CONTINUED NERVOUSNESS OVER IMPENDING FORMATION OF PGNU.

ON FEBRUARY 14, THE HIN HEUP-BAN DONE ROAD, A USAID-SPONSORED PROJECT, WAS INAUGURATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND USAID DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE. THIS ROAD IS ANOTHER USG-RLG EFFORT TO LINK ISOLATED COMMUNITIES WITH RLG HEARTLAND.

THE DIRECTOR OF LAO CIVIL AVIATION ANNOUNCED AIR FRANCE WILL BEGIN IN APRIL MAKING TWO STOPS PER WEEK IN VIENTIANE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE RLG HAS APPROACHED PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF ROYAL AIR LAO AIRLINES TO REQUEST THAT RAL BE PERMITTED TO FLY FROM VIENTIANE TO CANTON AND PEKING. HE SAID THE CHINESE ARE STILL STUDYING THE REQUEST.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, ARMED FORCES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, PEACE PLANS, MEETING DE LEGATIONS, LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, GROUND COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: rowelle0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENTI01342
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740219/aaaaasht.tel
Line Count: 345
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 030795 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: rowelle0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 24 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <30-Sep-2002 by rowelle0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - FEBRUARY 19
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA, JCCIA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005